
Stem Cell Agency Awards More than \$42 million in New Research and Leadership Funding

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Berkeley, CA – California's position as a global leader in stem cell research has been strengthened by the awarding of \$36 million in funds to attract six world-class scientists to the state, and more than \$6 million to create a partnership with Sangamo BioSciences to develop a therapy for beta-thalassemia.

The Research Leadership Awards were created by the state's stem cell agency, the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), to help California universities and research institutions recruit the very best stem cell scientists in the world. These awards have so far helped California institutions recruit four other senior scientists to the state.

"To do the best science you need to have the very best scientists, and this award means that CIRM has attracted another six of the top researchers in stem cells and regenerative medicine in the world to California," says Alan Trounson, PhD, President of the stem cell agency. "These scientists have been chosen for their experience and expertise. Their work will help further advance the field and have a positive impact on our ability to develop new strategies in cell biology and new approaches for the cure and eradication of some of our most debilitating and deadly diseases."

The six include:

- Hiromitsu Nakauchi of the University of Tokyo moving to Stanford University
- Barry R. Stripp of Duke moving to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center
- Richard Gregory of Harvard and Children's Hospital, Boston moving to UC Santa Cruz
- Eric Ahrens of Carnegie Mellon moving to UC San Diego
- Kevin Kit Parker of Harvard moving to The J. David Gladstone Institutes

The awards depend on the researchers taking positions at their sponsoring institution. One researcher asked not to be identified publicly just yet to allow him time to inform his current institution and to complete negotiations with his new institution.

The funding was approved by the governing Board of the stem cell agency, the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC), at their meeting in Berkeley, CA on May 23.

The Board also approved \$6.37 million in funding for Sangamo BioSciences, as part of the Strategic Partnership II awards. Sangamo will match that amount to help develop a potential therapy for beta-thalassemia, a disorder that limits the ability of blood cells to carry oxygen around the body leading to anemia and other serious complications. During the four-year award the company is expected to finish a phase 1 clinical trial for their proposed therapy.

"Development of novel technologies is a long-term and expensive undertaking," said Edward Lanphier, Sangamo's president and CEO. "CIRM's support of innovation with these awards is critical to drive development of new therapies based on stem cells. We sincerely appreciate CIRM's support of our efforts to bring a potentially curative therapy to patients with beta-thalassemia."

About CIRM: CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research. You can learn more about the agency at www.cirm.ca.gov.